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MAY 2015

**"Teach us to number our days aright,
that we may gain a heart of wisdom." Psalm 90:12**

Dear Friends,

Twenty years. In the grand scheme of things twenty years is merely the blink-of-an-eye. For the Children of Israel, it was only half way through their sojourn in the desert. For Abraham Lincoln, twenty was considered a "score." Under United States laws, twenty is not old enough to drink, but old enough to vote. In many wars, the average age of the soldiers on the front-lines is about 20.

For Advocates International, twenty years marks the founding of the Rule of Law Institute Bulgaria (RLI). This month we've included the first of three parts of the story: ***Why the Rule of Law Institute Was Established***. I'm honored to see how God blessed Latcho with a vision for his country and especially for the legal professionals in Bulgaria, and across the globe. I'm honored to call Latcho my friend and brother. I remember that Saturday night in Utah when we laid hands on him—asking God to bless him and his nation—as if it was yesterday. We look forward in the coming months to sharing the rest of the RLI "His-story."

Please continue to pray with us for Latcho and his work not only in Bulgaria through the RLI, but also through Advocates Europe and the Integrity and Rule of Law Global Task Force. Pray also for the preparations for four upcoming Advocates conferences in 2015.

First, I will be joining our brothers and sisters from across Central Asia as they meet for a regional conference near Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan from **June 19-21**. Second, Advocates Africa convenes its 11th continental convocation in Cape Town, South Africa from **August 12-16**. In conjunction with that gathering, the Global Council and Board of Advocates will also meet. Third, the Federación Inter Americana de Juristas Cristianos (FIAJC/Advocates Latin America) will convene their 11th regional convención in San Salvador, El Salvador from **September 3-6**. Finally, Advocates Asia will convene its 14th continental conference in New Delhi, India from **October 22-24**. Pray for the many details and for safe travels for all those who need to attend each gathering.

As we number our days aright, we remain ever grateful for your prayers and your financial support. Your engagement with us helps us encourage, equip and enable advocates around the globe so they will gain hearts of wisdom to better serve their nations.

May the Lord bless and keep you in His perfect . . .

Grace and Peace,



Brent McBurney
President and CEO



WHY THE RULE OF LAW INSTITUTE WAS ESTABLISHED

Latchezar Popov, Esq., Chairman, the Rule of Law Institute, Bulgaria

In 1989, I had been married for eight years and our daughter was a six-year-old.

The political climate in Bulgaria was not showing signs for any radical change, and most ordinary people did not have any prospects for the future. I was working as a chief lawyer expert in the Headquarters of the Union of Bulgarian Business Co-Operative Associations (the Union). My duties as legal expert included primarily the implementation of the financial and labor laws and checking the drawn up legal statements by the Union departmental audits for the financial discipline of its entities. Very often, such statements ended the audit with suggestion for financial sanctions against the accountants or other employees of the subdivision. At this time, each new day I felt increasing spiritual hunger to know more about the power of God.

Even though the main religion in Bulgaria is in the Eastern Orthodox tradition since 865 AD, the 44 years of atheism dominated our education system and eroded the faith communities in the country.

I realized that the search for God in our lives had become a major pursuit for my wife, daughter, and our parents. What I did not realize was that this drive was going to coincide with the major political changes in the country. The changes started in November of 1989, and a new Bulgaria Constitution was adopted in 1991. As a result, most of the clauses of the previous Creeds Act were renounced by the new Constitutional Court.

Also, in 1992 the restrictive legal bar association changed its policy and opened itself to new members. In 1992 I was accepted as a member of the Bulgarian legal bar.

Following the revival of my faith, I was helping the newly established religious societies register with the government as was required by the law. This task was not an easy one because there were not at hand appropriate legal instruments and rule of law to replace the renounced clauses from the Creeds Act. Most of the cases were running very slow and the skills of mediation were very helpful. I was successful and helped many Christian groups to receive their registrations.

During the spring of 1994, a lawyer from the United States came to my church. He was introduced to me by a Bulgarian professor, and we talked briefly about a new and exciting concept for me—beginning a professional group for Christian lawyers. Until then I was content with developing my own legal practice and helping my church. I did not know that this meeting would dramatically change my life.

During the summer of 1994, I received an invitation by the same lawyer to attend a conference of Christian lawyers. In October, I saw an incredible fellowship of Christian lawyers. Deep in my heart I wished to start such fellowship in my country and I committed myself to this concept. When I confessed my desire from the podium in the last evening of the conference, the President of this Christian organization invited the 200+ attendees to pray for me and lay hands on me.

When I returned to Bulgaria, I was back to do my job as a lawyer, but I also started to look for other Christian colleagues and to gather them in my office. They were mostly in their final year at law school or at the beginning of their legal carrier. Our first meeting started in November 1994 and it has now continued for over 20 years.

The lawyer who visited me was the President of Advocates International Sam Ericsson. The President of the Christian organization who prayed for my mission and whose members laid hands on me was Sam Casey. The Christian organization that organized the event was the Christian Legal Society, and the place where the Conference took place was Snowbird, Utah.

The result from this event, which will follow, is “His (God`s) Story,” as Sam Ericsson used to say.

**This is Part One of a three-part celebration of the
20th Anniversary of the Rule of Law Institute, Bulgaria**

(May 2015)